



GENERAL POLICE ORDER CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE



EFFECTIVE DATE: MARCH 1, 2002	REVISED DATE: JULY 18, 2007	NO. PAGES: 1 of 2	NUMBER: 3.1.04
SUBJECT: LOCKOUT GUIDELINES			
ASSOCIATED MANUAL:		RELATED ORDERS:	
CHIEF OF POLICE: <i>Michael McGrath, Chief</i>			

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for the forcible unlocking of vehicles, buildings or other structures.

POLICY: Officers shall not directly force entry or assist with the opening of locked vehicles, windows, doors or any other points of entrance or exit of a building or any other structure except in exigent circumstances. Entry into a vehicle is authorized only in the circumstances listed below. Because of the possibility of damage, persons requesting assistance in circumstances other than those authorized below are to be advised to seek assistance from a towing agency or locksmith.

Officers who attempt to enter a vehicle under circumstances other than those authorized shall be **responsible** for damage caused to the vehicle as a result of the attempted entry.

PROCEDURES:

- I. Members of the Division of Police shall attempt to gain entry to a vehicle, building or structure **only** under the following circumstances.
 - A. In cases of medical emergency (e.g. a child, elderly, or incapacitated person locked inside a structure or vehicle).
 - B. Hazards to life or property if entry to the vehicle, building or structure is delayed (e.g. unattended heat source, biological or chemical contamination that is an imminent danger; or an animal is locked inside).
 - C. When the vehicle is blocking traffic, creating a hazard, or in danger of being damaged or destroyed and the dangerous condition precludes waiting for a tow truck to remove the vehicle.

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- D. When conditions exist that would reasonably lead an officer to believe that taking no action would lead to the conditions listed above.
- E. When necessary to execute legal process (e.g. search and arrest warrants)

II. Dispatching

- A. Communications personnel shall screen all caller requests for lockout service to verify that exigent circumstances exist that would require entry. No unit shall be dispatched unless exigent circumstances require a response.
- B. If an emergency response is warranted, a supervisor shall respond to the scene of the lockout request to confirm that exigent circumstances exist for an immediate police action. Forced entry may be made prior to a supervisor's arrival if on-scene personnel believe that conditions exist that persons or property are in immediate peril.
- C. If a citizen's request for lockout assistance does not meet the above criteria, the citizen shall be courteously advised to seek the assistance of a towing agency, auto club or locksmith of their choice.

- III. Responses to lockout requests that result in property damage shall be properly documented with a RMS report, (e.g. Damage to Property while performing a police function). If damage is not caused, then the supervisor and on-scene officers shall make a notation on their duty reports: "NO DAMAGE", and the name of the person on scene, preferably the owner of the property.